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Emily Duffy
Independent Study
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**“Nobody else knows me, but the street knows me”
Jean Rhys’s Urban Flâneuses: Mapping *Good Morning, Midnight***

“Haunted places are the only ones people can live in” - Michel de Certeau

In the first page of *Good Morning, Midnight*, Sasha Jensen’s room speaks to her: “‘Quite like old times,’ the room says. ‘Yes? No?’” (Rhys 9). Is it like old times? Not quite, at least from a material perspective. She has just returned to Paris for a vacation, funded by a friend. Sasha, protagonist and narrator, ironizes the trope of the Rhysian heroine (hapless and drifting), because she is not economically dependent on men, though she has been in the past. Sasha is not complicit in her own degradation, and we see her identifying with other women and wryly commenting on the ways in which men try to degrade and police her. She experiences her return to Paris as a secure, older woman with money, yet she’s haunted by the “dark streets, dark rivers, the pain, the struggle and the drowning” (10) of her younger days. Rhys not only articulates a “second poetic geography on top of the geography of the literal” (de Certeau 104), but demonstrates how memory cohabitates with the present moment. French scholar Michel de Certeau, along with other spatial scholars discuss the idea of toponymy, the study of place names, their origins and meanings. For an individual, places, their names and associations hold specific and subjective significance. Sasha’s Paris is inhabited space; each locale bears a specific meaning for her. Her wandering has enabled her to know the city intimately. Her knowledge of the city extends beyond knowing where things are located, but how her body, emotions and memory react to different spaces. My project explores the urban geography of

Paris, as depicted by Rhys, through theories of space articulated by Walter Benjamin, Michel de Certeau, and Gaston Bachelard. I will provide some theoretical context to show how approaching this novel from a spatial perspective can help us understand Sasha's experience. Additionally, I explore how Sasha's gendered body moves through these spaces, how place and space affect her identity, and how mapping this novel can enrich the experience of the reader, especially a reader who is unfamiliar with interwar Paris.

Spatial turn is an emerging critical lens that emphasizes the importance of space and place in literature. In their chapter "Spatial Identities," from *Discourse and Identity*, critics Benwell Bethnan and Elizabeth Stokoe investigate the link between place, space and identity formation. They explore a range of critical approaches, considering feminism, narrative, discursive psychology and embodiment in relation to space. The chapter discusses the spatial turn across academic disciplines and how it serves to contextualize social life: The "Spatial turn has roots in poststructuralist and postmodern theory, drawing on Foucault's observation that we are currently living in an 'epoch of space.'" (Benthan, Stokoe 211). Elucidation on Foucault's "epoch of space" can be found in his essay "Of Other Spaces: Utopias and Heterotopias." He posits that "we are in the epoch of simultaneity: we are in the epoch of juxtaposition, the epoch of the near and far, of the side-by-side, of the dispersed" (Foucault 350). Here, Foucault gives credence to the notion that space is necessary to represent and consider. The following passage from *Good Morning, Midnight* illustrates the importance of space in the novel:

Was it in 1923 or 1924 that we lived round the corner, in the Rue Victor Cousin, and Enno bought me that Cossack cap and the imitation astrakhan coat? It was then that I started calling myself Sasha. I thought it might

change my luck if I changed my name. Did it bring me any luck, I wonder
– calling myself Sasha?

Was it in 1926 or 1927? (Rhys 12)

Here, Sasha is unclear on the exact year, but she vividly remembers Rue Victor Cousin. This supports the claim that “*space*, rather than *time*, is crucial to contemporary cultural and social analysis” (Benthan, Stokoe 211). It was “then” that [she] started calling [her]self Sasha really means it was “there” that [she] started calling [her]self Sasha. Additionally, that she’s referencing a name change reinforces the link between place and identity. The authors also argue that tellers express a sense of “who they are through stories about where they are” (216). Throughout *Good Morning, Midnight*, Sasha recalls specific place-based memories. She remembers “standing in the middle of the Place de l’Opera, losing [her] head and not knowing the way to the Rue de la Paix” (30) from her time working as a tour guide, “blue sky over the streets, the houses, the bars, the cafes, the vegetable shops and the Faubourg Montmartre” (128) before her husband leaves her, and that “there used to be a good hat shop in the Rue Vavin” (68). In these passages, Rhys illustrates Sasha’s relationship with space. Her mention of “losing her head” points to the fact that Sasha relies on the locales she is so familiar with to orient herself. Without them, she is lost.

Physical spaces in Jean Rhys’s novels provide the reader with a sense of social organization and the subliminal and explicit exercise of power dynamics between characters. In *Good Morning, Midnight*, physical spaces and objects are personified. For Sasha, for example, there are safe cafes, neutral cafes and unsafe ones. There are places where she is liked, streets that are “friendly,” rooms where she “might” be happy, looking glasses she looks nice in and dresses that will be lucky (Rhys 46). In his chapter “Walking in the City” *The Practice of*

Everyday Life (1980) Michel de Certeau argues that: “Places are fragmentary and inward-turning histories, pasts that others are not allowed to read, accumulated times that can be unfolded but like stories held in reserve, remaining in an enigmatic state, symbolizations encysted in the pain or pleasure of the body. ‘I feel good here’: the well-being under-expressed in the language it appears in like a fleeting glimmer is a spatial practice” (108). Here, de Certeau emphasizes the importance of considering the ways in which our bodies and emotions react to places. He also notes the subjectivity of place. By asserting that places are “pasts that others are not allowed to read” (108) he makes the public private and personal. By this definition, we observe that Sasha constantly engages in spatial practice. She knows whether or not she feels good in a place, and constantly monitors how she feels moving through different spaces. Grasping spatial turn is important in understanding how and why Sasha categorizes her space in such a way.

These categories are especially gendered. Sasha desires to look good, and be well liked. However, she critiques and attempts to mitigate those own desires. She puts a system in place, but does not always adhere to it. “The thing is to have a programme, not to leave anything to chance—no gaps. No trailing around aimlessly with cheap gramophone records starting up in your head, no ‘Here this happened, here that happened’. Above all, no crying in public, no crying at all if I can help it.” (Rhys 15). By mapping the locations that Sasha mentions we can begin to understand her psychic relationship with spaces in Paris. In her fragmented, elliptical narrative, memory is constantly intruding into Sasha’s present day experiences. This is why she tries to avoid certain locations. Through mapping Sasha’s old residence with Enno, I discovered that Rue Victor Cousin is also where Cinéma du Panthéon is located (see fig. 1), one of the theaters that Sasha cries in.

Fig 1.



Through awareness of Sasha's present narration and recollection, we are able to better understand how she experiences walking through Paris. Her subjective observations "indicate the invisible identities of the visible" (de Certeau 108). A strong example of this point is when Sasha looks for a hat-shop that doesn't exist anymore: "There used to be a good hat shop in the Rue Vavin" (Rhys 68). Once she realizes that it no longer exists, she wanders "aimlessly along a lot of back streets where there aren't any hat-shops at all" (68). She is dislocated, for a moment because a place she had been familiar with is no longer there. Since her sense of identity is so intimately bound with places and knowing where they are, she experiences a moment of disorientation. de Certeau writes "The dispersion of stories points to the dispersion of the memorable as well. And in fact memory is a sort of anti-museum: it is not localizable. Fragments of it come out in legends. Objects and words also have hollow places in which a past sleeps, as in the everyday acts of walking, eating, going to bed, in which ancient revolutions slumber[...]. What can be seen designates what is no longer there: 'you *see*, here there used to be...', but it can no longer be seen" (de Certeau 108). What Sasha sees in her present narration also defines

the places she remembers but are no longer in existence. Another example of this disorientation occurs when Sasha goes to a bar an old flame called “Pig and Lily.” She doesn’t see why she shouldn’t revisit it as she “never made scenes there, collapsed, [or] cried “ (39). However, when she arrives she finds that “the place is empty- dead as a door-nail” (Rhys 41). There is a new owner and the food is different. Fellow patrons of the establishment speak curiously about her and she concludes “This is as I thought and worse than I thought....A mad old Englishwoman, wandering around Montparnasse” (41). Her warm, neutral associations with this location are engulfed with humiliation and despair. This speaks to de Certeau’s point that memory is not “localizable.” Sasha’s attempts to re-access more positive associations with places prove to be futile, because the topography of the Paris she knows (more specifically, her “second poetic geography”) is amorphous and constantly shifting.

Sasha, like all of Rhys’s protagonists, is a peripheral woman. Her wandering and attention to her surroundings evokes Walter Benjamin’s flâneur. As Benjamin writes, a flâneur is an urban spectator, someone who experiences a city through leisurely strolling. In his essay “Paris, the Capital of the Nineteenth century” Benjamin discusses Baudelaire’s Parisian lyric poetry in his development of the flâneur. He writes “This poetry is no hymn to the homeland; rather, the gaze of the allegorist, as it falls on the city, is the gaze of the alienated man” (10). A flâneur is an outsider, and he moves anonymously through urban spaces. He “seeks refuge in the crowd” (21); the crowd serves as a veil for him to experience phantasmagoric aspects of urban capitalism. Rhys’s flâneuses of London and Paris are not afforded this anonymity. Because they move through urban spaces as women in gendered bodies, they are hyper visible. In *Good Morning, Midnight* Sasha’s associations with places contribute to her inability to be an anonymous and impassive observer. She describes the panic she feels going into one of her

“bad” cafes and being recognized by some of the patrons: “Now everybody in the room is staring at me; all the eyes in the room are fixed on me. It has happened” (50). Sasha describes the terror of being recognized and visible. As a woman with a past in Paris, she is unable to move through and reside in spaces anonymously. She is recognized: her fear is realized.

As Benjamin’s flâneur observes and critiques commodity culture, Rhys’s Sasha also engages with these themes. She recalls working as a tour guide. The rich woman she’s touring around Paris want to go to a certain exhibition, but the woman can’t recall where they are:

Now she wants to be taken to the exhibition of Loie Fuller materials, and she wants to be taken to the place where they sell that German camera which can’t be got anywhere else outside Germany, and she wants to be taken to a place where she can buy a hat which will épater everybody she knows and yet be easy to wear, and on top of all of this she wants to be taken to a certain exhibition of pictures. But she doesn’t remember the man’s name and she isn’t sure where the exhibition is. However, she knows that she will recognize the name when she hears it. I try. I question waiters, old ladies in lavabos, girls in shops. They all respond. There is a freemasonry among those who prey on the rich. I manage everything, except perhaps the hat (31).

This passage demonstrates a criticism of commodity culture. There is the mention of multiple exhibitions, which Benjamin argues are “places of pilgrimage to the commodity fetish” (7).

There is also significance to the mention of the different working individuals Sasha calls upon for help. All are confined to a specific space; “old ladies in lavabos”, “girls in shops.” Sasha’s job as a tour guide allows her to move more freely about the city, but only marginally so, since her “wandering” is contingent upon the whims of her rich client. As a young woman, Sasha is

not able to engage in the *flânerie* that older age and economic security affords her. Her frantic job prevents her younger self from indulging in recollections and poetic meditations on place and space. Another striking component about this passage is that immediately after this experience she begins “thinking about the black dress, longing for it, madly, furiously” (32) demonstrating that she too desires material goods. She also buys into the promise of capitalism, thinking that if she could afford to buy and have the dress “everything would be different” (32). In this passage, Sasha seems to be critiquing her younger self. However, we also know that older Sasha is preoccupied with clothing, new hats and new hairstyles. She places importance on material goods and appearance in identity formation, when really it is the streets of Paris that have shaped and continue to shape her identity.

Sasha is an almost-*flâneur*. Two critics have described Sasha as a walker, but not quite a *flâneur*. Linda Camarasana writes, “not quite the *flâneur* of Walter Benjamin’s boulevards, Sasha’s goal is to avoid the memories triggered by her surroundings” (53). Another critic who positions Rhys among Benjamin and a number of expatriate writers is Geoff Gilbert, in the *Cambridge Companion to the Literature of Paris*. He writes, “Rhys’s writing is constantly fretting about the position of women observed in cafés, working, drinking, serving...” (203). While Gilbert correctly observes the ubiquity of these women, his use of the word “fretting” delegitimizes Rhys’s authorial voice. Women “fret” over silly things. Rhys is responding to the very real, material trauma which confronts economically disadvantaged women in urban settings. I believe Mary Lou Emery gets it right in her conflation of Benjamin and Rhys’s concerns: “Benjamin and Rhys, I would argue, see such deceitful and inauthentic pleasure in mass culture, not because of an elitist philosophy of individualism, but because of the totalitarian ideologies swaying masses of people during the 1930s” (Emery 168). We see this point evidenced in

Sasha's observations of a past companion: "He loved popular fairs, this boy—the Neuilly fair, the Montmartre fair, even the merry go rounds at the Lion de Belfort—and he had painfully taught himself to like music. Bach, of course, was his favorite composer" (Rhys 40). Here, we see Rhys's subtle critique of her past companion's affinity for mass delights, such as popular fairs. Her wry remark about Bach shows that she is critical of popular music and pastimes. That she remarks "Bach, of course, was his favorite composer" could be interpreted elitist individualism, but as Emery notes, both Rhys and Benjamin are concerned with "ideologies swaying the masses" (Emery 168). I agree with Emery, and I read Sasha's dry humor as skepticism and a critique of inauthenticity rather than an expression of some elite philosophy of individualism.

This reading resounds especially because Sasha is a woman without economic privilege or a social group. She has experienced economic insecurity, and the trauma that comes with "the drowning.... [and not the] struggle when you are strong and a good swimmer and there are willing and eager friends on the bank waiting to pull you out at the first sign of distress." (Rhys 10). Her spatial practices are marked with alienation and fear. Sasha lives without a safety net. She is alone and at the same time, as I've mentioned, hypervisible due to her gendered body. Benthon and Stokoe weave spatiality and identity with feminism by bringing in second wave feminism and ideas from feminist geographers. They discuss the dichotomies between public and private space, and the gendering of public urban spaces. They also mention how trauma can affect a woman's identity, sense of power and relationship with domestic space: "Research with battered women shows that their relationship to residence is particularly complex and fraught with both positive and negative meanings" (213). There are various types of gendered trauma

depicted in *Good Morning, Midnight* including what I see to be depression, poverty, sexual assault and the discrediting of women's voices.

Good Morning, Midnight, argues Emery, “confronts head-on social violence against women and connects it to the persecution of Jews and other racial minorities” (145). What does Emery mean by “social violence?” We see hints in Sasha's own experiences: both recollection and current day. We also see glimpses of other women's experiences. They are recounted by men as Sasha's interactions with other women are minimal and surface level. However, Sasha's reactions to these women's stories reveal the depth of her understanding and empathy. The first example conflates poverty with shame and a woman's voice discredited. Walking up the Boulevard Arago causes her to remember an encounter with a man—he approaches her even though she is “walking with [her] head down” (Rhys 87), not inviting any attention. Over drinks with this man, he reads her a letter he's received from a girl. The conclusion of the letter requests three hundred francs for new shoes—as there are holes in her shoes and she is “ashamed to go into the street [...] ashamed to be so poor” (88). Sasha's companion doubts the veracity of this girl's plea, claiming, “It's all a lie, it's a snare, it's a trap.” Finally, he discredits her voice completely: “This girl, you understand, is a liar.” (Rhys 88).

The second example is the crying mixed-race woman, whose story is recounted by Delmar (le peintre) when Sasha and Serge visit him at his studio. He encountered this woman lying in a hotel hallway in London, a “half-Negro—a mulatto” (Rhys 95) crying hysterically. Through his story, he reveals that this woman was living with a white man to whom she was not married. He alludes to her loneliness, alienation and economic dependence: “She said that every time they looked at her she could see how they hated her, and the people in the streets looked at her the same way [...] she talked for a long time about this monsieur. It seemed that she stayed

with him because she didn't know where else to go, and he stayed with her because he liked the way she cooked" (96). Sasha identifies with both of these women. In the first case, she does not directly challenge the man's assumption that the girl is lying. Rather, she muses that it is not amusing to walk with holes in one's shoes "especially on a rainy day" (Rhys 89), suggesting her own experience with tattered shoes. In the second case, Sasha compares herself to the mixed woman's crying and then asking for a drink: "'Exactly like me [...] I cried, and I asked for a drink'" (Rhys 95). The painter is quick to dismiss this comparison. These examples support Judith Kegan Gardiner's argument that "'They' who make language make the landscape and create its inhabitants." (235). Male characters are the language producers- they dictate and interpret the experiences of these peripheral women, and even presume to know what is best for them¹. These examples demonstrate how Sasha accesses other women's experiences through a male perspective. Overwhelmingly, these stories reflect common traumatic themes in the modern female urban experience. Their relationship to residence *and* public urban space is "complex and fraught with both positive and negative meanings" (Benthan, Stokoe 213).

Sasha's relationship to outside spaces is easier to plot. She is very clear about which cafés and public spaces are good, bad, or neutral in her imagination. However, her opinions are more ambiguous when it comes to defining interior spaces. Interior spaces, specifically hotel rooms, are markedly more negative in her experience and memory. Unlike the cityscape, in which she can avoid locales that are "bad", hotel rooms are spaces that enclose Sasha with her despair. In her present-day hotel room, she is harassed and haunted by the *commis*, an intrusive man across

¹ For some reason, the men are sure that having sex with these women will help them. Delmar says, about the mixed woman: "I knew all the time that what she wanted was that I should make love to her and that it was the only thing that would to her any good" (Rhys 97). Toward the end of the novel, the gigalo says he wants to make love to Sasha: "He says: 'It doesn't matter. What I know is that I could do this with you'—he makes a movement with his hands like a baker kneading a loaf of bread—and afterwards you'd be different. I know. Believe me.'" (175).

the hall who leers at her in his “white dressing gown” (Rhys 14). Sasha considers changing her hotel room multiple times, before concluding, “All rooms are the same” (Rhys 38)². “The man who has the room next to mine is parading about as usual in his white dressing gown. Hanging around. He is like the ghost of the landing. I am always running into him” (14). Overall, a feeling of dread seems to pervade her relationship with these hotels and rooms: “And there I am in this dim room with the bed for madame and the bed for monsieur and the narrow street outside (what they call an impasse), thinking of that white dressing gown, like a priest’s robes. Frightened as hell. A nightmare feeling....” (35). Outside, on the streets, Sasha can do her best to avoid “bad” locations. Inside however, she is trapped.

I am not able to “map” the interior locations Sasha discusses, but I do think that they provide an important contrast to the way Rhys treats “outside” spaces in the novel. Gaston Bachelard and Judith Kegan Gardiner provide theoretical context for thinking about the arrangement of external and internal space in *Good Morning, Midnight*. Bachelard’s *The Poetics of Space* meditates on the relationships between consciousness, language, poetry and architecture. Featuring the house as a central point of discussion, he moves through the various parts of the house (such as attic, stairs and basement) and discusses them as “inhabited space”: bearers of meaning. The movement of his analysis is similar to the way Judith Kegan Gardiner treats the opening passage of *Good Morning, Midnight*. In her essay “Good Morning, Midnight; Goodnight Modernism” Gardiner analyzes the opening passage, focusing on its gendered implications. She writes, “the description goes from the room to the street outside, omitting the containing building; thus it opens the enclosed room, the female space, to the outside street. Yet ‘the street outside’ is also inside. Like an Escher etching, the street becomes a staircase, and its

² Sasha also critiques the value/commodity/market of hotel rooms: “never tell the truth about this business of rooms, because it would bust the roof off everything and undermine the whole social system” (Rhys 38).

flight of steps both tempts and blocks escape” (Gardiner 235). In this passage especially, Rhys’s writing “undoes such dichotomies of thought as private/public and inside/outside” (Emery 145). In *Poetics of Space*, Gaston Bachelard writes, “Outside and inside form a dialectic of division, the obvious geometry of which blinds us as soon as we bring it into play in metaphorical domains. It has the sharpness of the dialectics of *yes* and *no*, which decides everything” (Bachelard 211). Considering this point in conjunction with Gardiner’s reading of the space shows us that inside/outside and yes/no are gendered dialectic binaries. Sasha’s “Yes—yes—yes....”(190) while she embraces the *commis* has often been read as a nod to James Joyce’s Molly Bloom. However in this context, her acquiescence reads as submission to the inevitable. It also does the work of demonstrating how, for Sasha, inside/outside and yes/no aren’t as polar as Bachelard makes them seem. Female sexuality is still a contentious and policed arena. Gardiner writes that “sexuality holds the promise of bridging the opposition between men and women, but patriarchal society forbids the voicing of any but polarized desires” (235). This aspect of Gardiner’s argument stresses the importance of language in dividing and defining our physical spaces. Rhys shows us that Sasha is threatened and haunted both “outside” and “inside.” Inside her hotel is the pervasive specter of the *commis*, and outside by memories of pain, poverty and humiliation. Even in the supposed refuge of her hotel room, she is not safe. Her “no” turns into a “yes” not in an act of agency, but fatigue.

Another “no” that turns into a “yes” is Sasha’s consideration of the Exhibition. At the beginning of the novel, she writes “Everywhere there are placards printed in red letters: This Way to the Exhibition, This Way to the Exhibition. But I don’t want the way to the exhibition—I want the way out” (Rhys 13). As a reader unfamiliar with the history of interwar Paris, I didn’t know which Exhibition Sasha is referring to. As it turns out, she is referencing the Great Paris

International Exhibition, which included modern art and international pavilions (see Fig. 2).

Benjamin writes “World exhibitions glorify the exchange value of the commodity. They create a framework in which its use value recedes into the background” (7). It could be that Sasha is resistant to an environment that glorifies and fetishizes commodity and colonialism. Through mapping and researching this point, I was better able to contextualize Sasha’s resistance to the exhibition. This exhibition took place in 1937, two years before World War II and three years before the Nazi occupation of France. Sasha’s hesitation to go there expresses resistance to fascist displays of world power on the eve of the Second World War. Through contextualizing this location, I was able to understand how Sasha’s cultural and political knowledge is manifested in her attitudes toward different spaces.

It’s the hour between dog and wolf, as Sasha says. She’s referring to hours between dusk and dawn, and this Rhys novel also takes place between the “dog” and “wolf” of the two World Wars. *Entre Deux Guerres*, the Paris in *Good Morning, Midnight* (1939) is in a time of transition and modernity. The International Exposition dedicated to Art and Technology in Modern Life is an omnipresent beacon of modernity, and a sinister one at that given that Europe is on the brink of war. Given this context, we can better understand Sasha’s resistance to this space. However, when she arrives there she reacts in a positive manner: “Cold, empty, beautiful. This is what I imagined, this is what I wanted (Rhys 163). This reaction seems jarring, given her pervasive aversion to the Exhibition. While I don’t believe Sasha’s reaction indicates an expression of support of Fascist politics, I think there are two layers of reading we can apply to this moment. First, since Sasha has never before been to the Exhibition, she has no memories or prior associations with the space. Her perception of this location is “cold, empty, beautiful.” One can imagine that after wandering streets drenched in memory, this comes as a bit of a relief. This

space, with its clean lines and powerful architecture gives Sasha peace of mind in some sense. Second, she links her acceptance of the space with desire when she narrates “this is what I imagined, this is what I wanted” (163). This moment is comparable with Sasha’s acquiescence to the *commis*. A “yes” typically conveys agency and desire, but in both these cases I contend it implies submission to an omnipresent and inevitable force.

Fig. 2



Despite the fact that Sasha seems hapless, aimless and drifting in Paris, if we pay close attention it’s clear that she knows the city very well. At the beginning of Part Two, Sasha and her Russian companion, Serge, discuss the best way to go to Delmar’s place. They argue whether or not to take a bus or taxi. The Russian contends “we could walk. It’s just off the Avenue d’Orleans, about five minutes’ walk.” (Rhys 85). Sasha argues that “it’s more like half an hour.” Through mapping the distance from their location (Luxembourg Gardens) to their destination (around Place Denfert-Rochereau) I discovered that Sasha was right. Walking, and

depending which route one takes, it would take between 29 and 34 minutes. I use this example to show how closely Sasha's identity is linked with the Parisian streets she walks. Although she appears nervous, indecisive, and alcoholic, her knowledge of the city and sense of place is consistent and almost expert; she always knows where she is. However, as I've previously noted, Sasha's spatial awareness seems to be tied to her mental and emotional well-being. In memory, Sasha recalls walking and names various locations she observes: "Blue sky over the streets, the houses, the bars, the cafes, the vegetable shops and the Faubourg Montmartre" (Rhys 128). This is right before Enno leaves her. After he leaves by train, she has coffee near the Gare du Nord and looks "through the window at the dark world and wide" (142). It's as if she doesn't even recognize her surroundings. She goes from inventorying her surroundings to being completely alienated from them. Her relationship to space is completely different immediately after Enno leaves.

Sasha's Paris is inhabited space. She walks along and slips into a memory- these memories are tied to place, and objects and items such as her checkered coat, or sounds, such as *L'Arlésienne*. On walkers in the city, de Certeau writes, "Their knowledge of them is as blind as that of lovers in each other's arms" (93). An alienated woman, Sasha's knowledge of the city is intimate. It is also deeply personal. Unlike the leisurely strolling of the *flâneur*, her walking is punctuated with memories of drowning. She has lived sexual violence, addiction, and poverty. Her gendered person has experienced trauma both inside and outside. Her memories cohabit with present moments. She cannot walk through the city with detachment or critical distance, because each corner and café is drenched in memory and association. Through the lens of a protagonist so engaged with space, Rhys does theoretical work in this novel. Its elliptical and fragmented style evokes and articulates ideas and arguments similar to de Certeau, Bachelard

and Benjamin. Mapping this novel clarifies and affirms Sasha's experiences. Without geographical context, *Good Morning, Midnight* can seem like collection of disjointed ramblings from a depressed and alcoholic *vieille*. In fact, it is an incisive commentary on a 20th century woman's relationship with urban space.

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